

for learning efficiently, he also provides him with an up-to-date background on the state of the art so that, indeed, there would be little, if any, need to seek other supplementary material.

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**35[12].**—MARIO V. FARINA, *Programming in BASIC*, Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1968, ix + 164 pp., 28 cm.

BASIC is the name of a programming language used on teletype consoles by students at Dartmouth College in time-sharing communication with the GE-265 and GE-645 computers. It does not have the flexibility of Fortran IV which it resembles in many ways, but what it lacks in repertoire it more than makes up for in terms of usefulness.

This text is an attempt to illustrate the BASIC language and it is to the credit of the author that he accomplishes his task magnificently. The book assumes no previous knowledge of either time-sharing features or programming know-how and, without realizing it, the reader is introduced to the language with ease and clear understanding.

On a recent visit to Dartmouth, I was told that it takes a student about two hours to learn BASIC. This may be somewhat of an exaggeration or may apply only to those specially gifted students we are used to seeing around computers nowadays. However, it takes only about two hours to get through Mr. Farina's book and it has the added advantage that if one has to learn BASIC one can enjoy it at the same time.

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**36[12].**—MARIO V. FARINA, *COBOL Simplified*, Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1968, xii + 528 pp., 28 cm.

Once again Mario Farina has shown that all it takes to write a clear, meaningful and substantial textbook on a computer language, is a thorough understanding of the subject matter, a penchant for short, precise statements, a sensitive pedagogic technique plus a desire to patiently present the subject matter in a logical order and in a manner designed to inform the reader in the most palatable way possible.

COBOL *Simplified*, despite its 528 easy-to-read pages, is an excellent contribution to the literature. It will not appeal to the COBOL expert or to one who is searching for all manner of novel or exotic techniques. Instead, it is ideally suited for the serious beginning student and very little by way of prerequisites is expected of him.